

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please **CANCEL** claims 1 – 13.

Please **ADD** claims 14 – 28.

The claims in this listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

14. (New) A membrane filter system, comprising:

at least one vessel;

a plurality of individually removable aerated filter modules arranged in the at least one vessel and structured and arranged for a suspension to be filtered to flow through in parallel at least one filter module comprising a plurality of membrane units;

a plurality of spaces formed in the at least one vessel by plates arranged cross-wise with respect to a direction of flow through the filter modules;

at least one feed space for a common supply of the suspension to be filtered to the plurality of filter modules;

at least one permeate space for common discharging of permeate;

a feed pump for supplying the suspension to be filtered into the at least one feed space;

and

at least one feed distribution space positioned laterally at least partially around the at least one feed space,

wherein the at least one feed space comprises:

a feed distribution opening; and

an aeration device around which the suspension to be filtered flows, and

wherein the feed distribution opening is arranged so suspension to be filtered is guided into the at least one feed space from the at least one feed distribution space cross-wise with respect to the direction of flow through the filter modules.

15. (New) The system of claim 14, further comprising at least one retentate space for the common discharging of retentate.

16. (New) The system of claim 15, wherein the at least one permeate space surrounds the filter modules and is sealed off from the suspension to be filtered and the retentate, and wherein the permeate emerges into the permeate space from the filter modules.

17. (New) The system of claim 14, wherein each filter module further comprises an inlet-side end face, and the at least one feed space encloses at least the inlet-side end faces of all the filter modules and is connected to the individual filter modules for feeding in the suspension.

18. (New) The system of claim 15, wherein each filter module further comprises an outlet-side end face, and the at least one retentate space encloses at least the outlet-side end faces of all the filter modules and is connected to the individual filter modules for removing retentate.

19. (New) The system of claim 14, wherein the feed distribution space further comprises a tap-off device to at least one of empty the filtration device and remove contaminants.

20. (New) The system of claim 14, wherein the feed space further comprises an air pulse line for introducing an air pulse into the feed space.

21. (New) A method for operating the membrane filter system as claimed in claim 14, wherein a pressure difference between an inlet and an outlet of each membrane filter module is caused by a friction loss of a flow, and wherein a gasification achieves a reduction in a weight of a fluid column of the suspension in the filter module, which compensates for the pressure difference.

22. (New) A method for cleaning the membrane filter system as claimed in claim 14, comprising back-flushing permeate, counter to a production direction, through a membrane surface of the filter modules at periodic intervals in order to clean the membrane filter system.

23. (New) The method as claimed in claim 22, further comprising introducing a cyclical blast of air through an air pulse line into the feed space and into the filter modules in order to clean the membrane filter system.

24. (New) The method as claimed in claim 22, further comprising:

removing the suspension from the feed space;

back-flushing permeate through the filter modules;

at least one of aerating via the aeration device and mixing with one or more chemical cleaning solutions; and

pumping out contaminated flushing water.

25. (New) The system of claim 14, wherein at least one filter module comprises a plurality of identical membrane units.

26. (New) A method of filtering a suspension, comprising:

supplying a suspension to at least one feed space;

aerating the suspension in the at least one feed space;

feeding the suspension through to a plurality of individually removable aerated filter modules arranged in at least one vessel in a direction cross-wise to a direction in which the suspension is supplied to the at least one feed space, whereby a permeate flows into at least one permeate space adjacent the plurality of individually removable aerated filter modules; and

discharging the permeate from the at least one permeate space.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, further comprising:

discharging retentate into at least one retentate space.

28. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein at least one filter module comprises a plurality of membrane units.